

# THE WESLEYAN

Volume LXIX

May, 1951

Number 4

NINETEENTH WINTER .....	SHELIA RUBEL	4
NOTHING BUT THE WORLD .....	VIRGINIA MACKAY	7
HANK O'MALLEY'S MAGIC BUS .....	CAROLYN BLAKELY	12
SMITH, TAKE A WALK .....	JODY MANN	15
BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE .....	BILLIE JONES	17
TICKETS FOR TWO .....	CHARLOTTE BATTLE	20
DRUMS OF TIME .....	DAVID KNOWLES	22
TIME FOR THE BLUES .....	ANN ARMISTEAD	23
THE CAT WHO WENT TO COLLEGE .....	PEGGY STILES	25
SINGING WIRES .....	MARILYN SHAPIRO	28
WHAT HAPPENED TO MIKE .....	FRANCES DREW	30
THE TIME HAS COME .....	ANNE MCKAY	32
TIME: 9:57 A. M. ....	JERRIE THOMPSON	34
CARPE DIEM .....	ELINOR SMITH	36
THE SAD TALE OF ARCHIMEDES SMITH .....	JEAN ARMSTRONG	37
CREEPS IN THIS PETTY PACE .....	COURTNEY KNIGHT	39



# THE WESLEYAN

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## THE WESLEYAN

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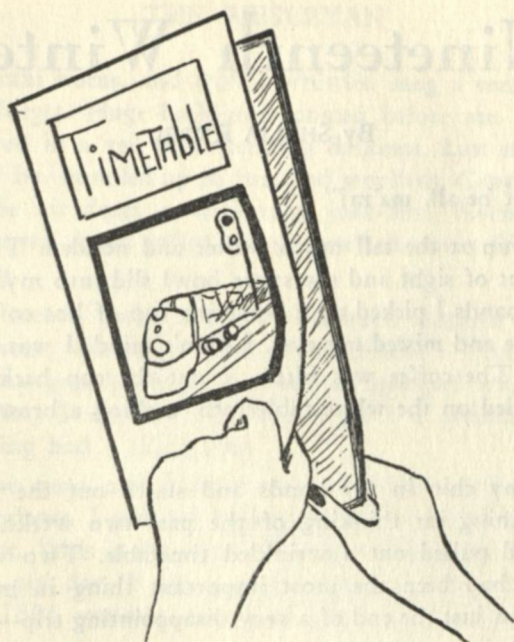
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Scribes is the honorary literary society of Wesleyan College, both the Liberal Arts College and the Conservatory of Music and School of Fine Arts.

Scribes is a continuation of the Wesleyan Writers' Club which was formed in 1920 by fourteen students interested in writing. In 1923, the name was changed to Scribes and Pharisees, and, in 1931, became simply Scribes.

The work of this society is displayed each year in the final issue of *The Wesleyan*. Each creation revolves around a central theme. The theme of the Scribes Issue of 1951 is "Timetable".

# Nineteenth Winter

By SHELIA RUBEL

"Will that be all, ma'm?"

I glanced up at the tall negro waiter and nodded. The train jerked as he moved out of sight and the sugar bowl slid into my lap. I replaced it. With both hands I picked up a wavering cup of hot coffee. The steam blew in my face and misted my eyes. I didn't mind. I was looking for an excuse to cry. The coffee was bitter. I put the cup back on the table. Some of it spilled on the white tablecloth, making a brown stain on the clean linen.

I rested my chin in my hands and stared out the window. I sat there in the dining car thinking of the past two weeks. I opened my pocketbook and pulled out a wrinkled timetable. Two weeks ago that piece of paper had been the most important thing in my life. It had meant more than just the end of a very disappointing trip—it was the end of a dream.

The train rounded a curve and the car swerved on the tracks. Silverware rattled. The roar of the train wheels diminished into a steady hum in my ears.

I sat silently watching trees fleet by me. I looked at the farmhouses and the telephone poles, the grass and the cows. They all moved so quickly as I sat so still. That's the way my two weeks in New York had moved—moved and passed by me, leaving things as they were before I made the journey. It was all over.

I had planned it all so carefully for so many months. I was so sure that nothing would go wrong. I knew exactly how I would meet him. I knew exactly where he would be. I knew exactly what time of day it would be when I would "casually" see him once again. I knew what I would say and how I would say it. I knew what I would wear and how I would wear it. I had thought of nothing else. There was nothing else I cared to think about. I saved my nickels and dimes and dollar bills regularly. Day by day I crossed out the dates on the calendar with a red pencil. When the last cross had been made and the page was red and blurred, I packed a suitcase, bought a ticket and within twenty-four hours I was being shoved around in Pennsylvania Station.

I had been in New York many times before. I had worked there for three months the previous summer, but never had it seemed so heart-breakingly beautiful as it did that freezing day in mid-December when I stepped out of Pennsylvania Station with a suitcase in my hand.

I stood still for a long moment feeling the snow flurries strike my face. The noise of moving tires on wet pavement, mingled with the



dissonance of taxi horns, and traffic whistles, sang a song of gladness I would never forget. Huge buildings loomed before me, their tops and towers enveloped in a veil of descending darkness. Last minute shoppers walked swiftly by, bundled up in furs and woollens. Canned music floated through the air from a restaurant juke-box. Horns tooted, bells rang, music played, buses rolled, people walked, snow fell, and I stood still—watching.

I pushed into a stuffy subway and stood jammed against a door for half an hour, dreaming about—"tomorrow". Forty-five minutes later I kissed my grandparents, laughed and gossiped with my aunts as we sipped coffee. I dreamed of "tomorrow". I retired early on the pretext of having had a tiring trip.

Tomorrow came, and with it came a snowstorm. Cold sharp winds rattled the windows. I cuddled under my quilt and bit my lip to keep from crying out, "this is the day!" It was snowing and freezing cold—but today was my day. Nothing could stand in my way. The heaviest blizzard since 1896 couldn't have kept me home that day. It didn't.

I quickly dressed, gulped some steaming coffee, and was on my way out, when the phone began to ring—aunts, uncles, cousins and friends, calling. Couldn't they see I had no time to waste discussing the health and happiness of my family at home. But they chattered away, one after the other. Finally I slammed down the receiver on the last cousin and dashed out of the house before another call came through.

I trudged through fresh snow to the subway. I sat impatiently on a dirty straw seat, the rumbling of the cars echoing in my eardrums. The roar of the iron wheels seemed to repeat the words on my mind. "Faster, faster, faster." The moment the automatic doors opened I rushed out on the platform. I ran to the staircase with the sign "To Street" above it. Suddenly I slowed down. I was attracting attention.

I moved quickly through the streets heading for that one building, the Manhattan Tower where I had found happiness.

The huge doors swung heavily open as I entered. The gaiety of electric lights inside the building afforded a striking contrast to the dingy hues in the street. The elevator operator smiled a broad Hello as he saw me. We chatted idly while the "electric box" zoomed to the thirty-fourth floor. I swallowed hard to relieve the air pressure on my ears. The elevator operator always chewed gum. We stopped. The door opened. I got out. I took a deep breath and slowly walked to the girl at the information desk. She was surprised to see me after so many months and we talked for a few minutes.

"It's too bad", she said. "You just missed the crowd. They all left for lunch about five minutes ago. They would have loved to see you."

"That's all right," I replied with a vague smile. "I'll be back."

I spent the longest hour of my life, sixty aching minutes, wander-



ing aimlessly up and down the crowded avenues. The snow was falling heavily. The wind lashed my face with biting sharpness. It was difficult to walk.

Then . . . the elevator again, and the thirty-fourth floor. This time everyone was there. If I was quiet enough to sneak by the bosses' office unnoticed I could go in to see them. I tip-toed to the employees' lounge knowing full well how much they objected to visitors during working hours, even though the visitor was an old employee.

A sudden fear caught me—and I halted. How did I know he would be there? He could have quit a long time ago. It had been so many months anything could have happened. He might not even remember me, if he were there. If I could only see him this once. If only he would be there. I closed my eyes and uttered a last quick prayer. "Oh God please—let him be behind that door—please."

I turned the knob on the door and slowly walked in. Gay voices came to my ears. Quickly my eyes roamed the room—searching for him. I saw some of the girls seated in a huddle over coffee and movie magazines, engrossed in gossip and just plain talk. They didn't notice me.

He sat there. He was playing cards with a group of boys. He didn't notice me either. I brushed by his table and he caught a glimpse of my coat. He looked up out of curiosity. I watched him. For a moment he stared at me and then his face broke into a wide grin of recognition. I returned his smile shyly and turned my back in great haste to make my presence known to the girls in the corner. I talked with them for a few minutes. Unable to bear it any longer I turned to face him.

He sat at the card table, all alone, fiddling with a deck of cards, looking at me, waiting for me to speak. The words didn't come. The planned speeches dissolved. We just stared at each other. Finally we exchanged a few polite greetings and commented vaguely on the events of the past months. The minutes passed uncomfortably. An elderly gentleman spotted me and came over to talk.

He sat there patiently, waiting for me to finish speaking. I didn't stop. I couldn't stop without being rude. He shuffled his cards, glanced up, smiled, paid me some light compliment and left me standing there, talking to the elderly gentleman.

The train rolled along at about ninety miles an hour. The engineer blew the train whistle. It was an eerie, frightening blast. I looked at the timetable still clutched in my hand.

"Here's your check, ma'm."

I glanced up at the tall negro waiter. I glanced down at the table. The coffee was cold, the food untouched. I paid the check and tipped the waiter but I didn't eat. I had no appetite.



# Nothing But the World

Charlie Donovan laid his newspaper on the counter and looked up as he heard the light tap of the girl's heels come across the tile floor. She was blond, brown-eyed, and thin, with a small, heart-shaped face, childish in its lines, but not in its expression.

"A cup of coffee, please," she said, "no cream; do you carry magazines?"

"Sure, miss, they're right over there." Charlie pointed to the gaudy stand in the corner. "I'll have that coffee right away."

The girl chose a magazine, dropped the money for it quickly into Charlie's large hand, picked up her coffee, and tapped herself to the end booth, where she settled, apparently for a long wait. Charlie watched her reading, her eyes darting across the page, her short hair lying flat along her head like a cap of yellow cornsilk. She seemed full of energy, though she was sitting still, one strong hand grasping the magazine, the other on her coffee-cup. The clock over the door clicked loudly in the empty restaurant, and Charlie glanced toward it. Eleven-thirty, he thought. Next bus leaves at two-thirty. She's got three hours to kill, in the middle of the night, all by herself. I wonder where she's going.

The musings went on in his mind as he picked up his paper. Charlie liked his job tending the restaurant in the Greyhound station, especially the night shift. People were somehow friendlier at night; perhaps the dark streets outside and the echoing footsteps made them seek the warm light and cheerful shine of Charlie's midnight domain. Though they rarely noticed him moving easily among the counters and booths, they usually smiled or said goodnight on their way out again. He liked to think he had given them a sandwich or something to help pass the time, or to tide them over until the next stop.

The door swung open suddenly, and in walked the epitome of the red-blooded American youth. He looked like a baseball player—tall, lanky, sunburned. His eyes were deep-set china-blue, his hair sandy, his hand long but well-formed, and he was exceptionally graceful for a man, even for a soldier. His uniform stretched across wide shoulders as he caught the door behind him and set his bag down by the counter. Youngster, thought Charlie, just a young fellow . . . he saw the girl look up, smile a little, then look down again. She passed a hand over her smooth hair.

"Bacon, lettuce, and tomato," said the boy firmly. "And coffee." He picked up his bag and turned to find a place to sit. He strode to the end booth.

"Do you mind if I sit with you?" his voice was quiet and polite. The girl shook her head, moving her cup and beginning to read again. They'd make a nice-looking couple, thought Charlie. His mind was jumping to conclusions, but there was no harm in that. He smiled at himself



in the mirror as he made the sandwich. A guy sure can develop an imagination in this business.

"Hi, Charlie, you look rushed tonight," said a voice with a grin in it, right behind him.

"Yeah, the place is jammed with starving travelers, Jamie. How you been?"

"Pretty good, Charlie, pretty good." Jamie was the colored boy who mopped the floors of the station every night. He was as imaginative about it as Charlie was; he once remarked that he'd washed about a million footprints from the tiles since he'd been there, and he didn't even know where they were all going. He began to whistle as he pushed his mop back and forth, obliterating the trail left by the hurried and the slow, the short and the tall, the fat and the thin, the nameless number who had come and gone during the day.

The soldier and the girl were talking in low tones, their faces wearing the interested expression of people finding out things about one another. They stopped when Charlie set the plate down in front of the soldier.

"If you don't want to get marooned in this booth for about half an hour, you'd better sit up at the fountain," commented Charlie. "Jamie there doesn't like for folks to walk all over his wet floor. He feels kinda personal about it."

The boy looked up at Charlie, then across the table at the girl. "Let's get marooned," he said. "You don't have to leave yet, do you?"

"No, I think it would be fun. Maybe I'll write a book about it: *Marooned in a Booth*, by—me." She smiled at him; took his proffered cigarette. "Thanks."

"Fine then, we're marooned. Where are you headed from here?" They were again immersed in their conversation, so Charlie filled the cups and left them on their linoleum and chrome island, migrating back to his own.

The minutes ticked by, and the faces of the soldier and the girl changed, becoming animated, then quiet; laughing, then serious. The low murmur of their voices fluctuated and mingled, sometimes punctuated by a burst of laughter. Charlie suddenly felt lonely. Ever since Mill died, he'd sort of been on an island by himself, and missed her sharply now. He wished he and Mill were young again, marooned together. He could picture her face as she had smiled at him, an hour before the darkness and quiet of death had settled upon her, taking her away from him. He had moved from their little house on twenty-third street in Carter then, because he was so alone there, to a room in a boarding house where he returned each morning, to spend a few hours reading and smoking his pipe, and then to sleep. His life had fallen into a routine varied only by his musings upon the people he saw in the station and the tiny glimpses of their busy and full lives in which he could not participate, but of which he longed to be a part, however small. He was an onlooker, unobserved.



kindly, ignored; yet not unhappy, for his imaginative nature and gentle manner had a way of obscuring the constant loneliness, of protecting him from too much sorrow. He watched Jamie's consternation at the prospect of these two young folk who *wanted* to stay in their end booth while he mopped the tile floor under their feet. Most people moved, and it rather appalled him to see them put their feet on the opposite bench and continue talking as if nothing had happened. Jamie shrugged, dutifully swished the mop under the table, and left them to each other.

"I have a job in the library in Carter—that's about four miles from here—but I missed connections. There are some cousins of mine living there." The girl spoke with a rich voice, using her hands quickly, surely, and her eyes were direct and very, very brown as she told this stranger about herself. "I graduated from college last June, and I don't know quite what to do with myself. I loved English, but not enough to teach; I only wanted to read about people. I don't know why, exactly, but delving into the lives and times of past ages was a fascinating thing to me."

"I know why," he said, eager in his understanding. "You are the kind of person who will never become bored; you like people, and the age in which they live is no barrier to the making of friends." He held a match to her cigarette, and took one for himself. He leaned forward, searching for the light he knew would come across her face. It came.

"Oh, then you understand!" she exclaimed, catching his eagerness and making it her own. "Tell me, what about music? Do you like it?" she looked at him closely.

He glanced at her, surprised. Music was to him so enveloping, so compelling, so exhausting, that he had never been able to explain to anyone how he felt, not because he felt so deeply about it, but because he couldn't find the right words. Suddenly he knew what they were, and to him it seemed as though they had never been said before.

"Music is my life and my living. My life, because I would not be without it, my living, because I couldn't eat without it. Not before the Army, anyway."

"Then you were a musician? What do you play?"

"Anything with strings on it, mainly violin," he answered. How had she managed to hit on music? That had been a coincidence, and yet there was something uncanny in those dark eyes and quick hands. This girl had suddenly become important to him, more important than he had expected. He must be careful, he told himself. There's so little time—but he had to find out more about her—her name, where she lived, where she went, what she did and thought. How the devil had she hit on music?

For both, the station was far away. They and it had become a moment suspended in time, and the time was running out. There was nothing but the world for them to explore, and it was contained, for each, in the face on the other side of the hard blackness of the tabletop. Their voices blended and their eyes met; they understood.

Charlie finished his newspaper and poured himself a cup of coffee. The floor was nearly dry, so he risked Jamie's disapproval and walked



lightly over to the booth.

"The floor's dry now, if you want to leave—" He broke off, wondering if they would engage him in conversation. The girl looked up at him, her face interested, alight with youth and a restrained energy.

"Why do you work here?" she asked. "Do you ever think about it—I mean, about the people who come in here?"

"I like it," he leaned against the edge of the booth. His words rushed out, released from a long enforced silence. "I sometimes try to guess what they do and where they go, though I never really know, of course. Like one day a lady came in with two kids—cute as a bug's ear, they were, and she was worn out trying to take care of them. I thought she'd been in town shopping, and she was pretty tired, so I brought her a cup of nice hot coffee and some milk for the kids. She said it was just what she'd wanted, and the milk made the kids so sleepy they quit giving her any more trouble, too. Yeah, I like to figure out people as much as I can. Getting pretty good at it, too," he smiled, turning the gold band on his left hand. He never would have admitted it, but he was innately shy, and a sudden burst of confidence was unusual for him.

"What have you figured out about us?" the soldier asked, wondering if he would say it had been just another pick-up, one of many that occurred in the restaurant of a bus station.

"I don't know," Charlie said slowly, thinking it out. "I thought when you sat down here that you'd make a nice couple. Then I saw how you got right down to talking, real easy and friendly, and how you weren't playing any games, just finding out things because you were interested. I guess you found out a lot about each other. It doesn't take long with you youngsters; you aren't afraid of anything."

"No, not anything," the soldier glanced at the girl. "Not anything at all . . ." Charlie caught the tenseness of the low voice, and suddenly felt himself a part of their moment together.

"Where you heading, soldier?" he asked steadily. The fellow was so young, so young . . .

"Korea," came the answer. Charlie saw the girl's dark eyes become black. She put her cigarette out viciously, but said nothing. Only their eyes had betrayed them; they were both afraid. Charlie felt a desperate desire to tell them there was nothing they could do, that it was now a matter of kill or be killed, so it had to be done. There were only these few hours, dwindled to minutes now, and they couldn't waste it being afraid.

Listen, you two," he said quickly. "You haven't got much time. There's a park about a block north of here. Go on and walk there. It's quiet, and you can finish your talk out where there are trees and a bit of wind instead of in this place. One thing," he turned to the girl. "Watch the time, and be back here in half an hour. Now beat it." He held the door, and they went silently out to the deserted street. Charlie stood watching them walk slowly away, the wind blowing their coats about them, the yellow glow from the street lights falling over them, touching the girl's

hair with gold and catching on the soldier's cap. He watched them out of sight, then went back in to his coffee and newspaper. He was no longer lonely. He had found someone who needed him, really needed him, and he knew he could help the girl. She was going to feel an awful let-down when the bus pulled out of the station with her soldier on it, and she'd have to face the loneliness and fear all by herself. Maybe it wouldn't pan out, he thought, but even so, she'd want somebody to talk to now and then, and Charlie knew she'd come back. He remembered Mill then, Camilla-Peabody-Donovan, he'd used to call her sometimes. She was near him now, and he could almost see her shining face with the violet-blue eyes and flaxen-gold hair, laughing and teasing or furious at him for some misdemeanor. He was always amazed at his immense good fortune at having found her and won her all for himself. He had needed her; he was lost when she died but now perhaps she would be closer to him in this thin little girl who might so easily get hurt. He was startled by the door banging open.

"He's gone," she looked sad and tired. "He said he'd write, but I didn't know where I'd be. I had an aunt in Carter, but she died. I just told him to write Ann Peabody, care of Mr. Donovan here at the station. Is that all right? What's wrong?" Charlie was staring at her.

"Peabody? Your name is Peabody? Camilla Peabody . . ." Now Charlie knew he would never be lonely again. He smiled and took her hands. "Sit down, Ann; I have so much to tell you . . ."

—Virginia Mackay

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*There's a road that winds out of my window,  
A cool, dark, shady road.*

*It's speckled with moments of sunshine,  
A lovely, lively road.*

*It winds to the clouds and the sunset,  
A magic, mysterious road.*

*It's paved with old stars and new teardrops,  
A shifting, shimmering road.*

*It whispers of people and places,  
A wistful, watchful road.*

*It's measured in dreams and in wishes,  
An endless, timeless road.*

*It winds through the valley of sorrow,  
A secret, sacred road.*

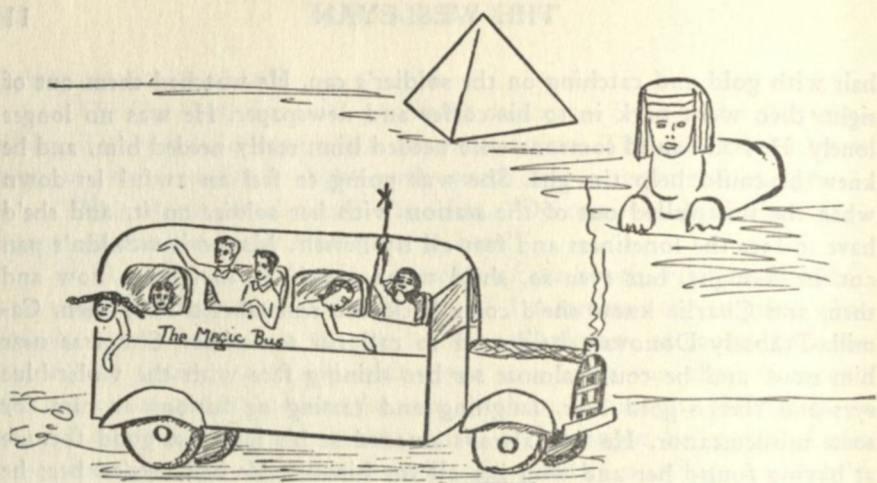
*Then up to the summit of laughter,  
A glorious, glittering road.*

*It climbs, and it dips, and it lengthens,  
A living, loving road.*

*Then it winds back into my window,  
A lonely, lonely road.*

—Marian Morris





# Hank O'Malley's Magic Bus

(a poem for serious-minded people)

*In New York City, up and down the streets,  
Where all the bustling city traffic meets,  
You'll see big busses zooming to and fro,  
That take you anywhere you want to go.*

*Now one of the best drivers in the biz  
Was Hank O'Malley with that bus of his.  
Hank thought the customer was always right,  
And, as bus drivers go, was most polite.*

*He drove "Old Miss", for so his bus was named,  
All over town, and fervently he claimed  
He'd never had a mishap, even small;  
And as for customers, he pleased them all.*

*At night he tucked "Old Miss" in her garage,  
Inspecting her for scratches, small or large.  
Days off he shined her till she glowed with pride.  
And smiled with all the chromium on her side.*

*Somehow, it was a tender sight to see  
The way Hank loved that blue monstrosity.  
He kept her gassed and oiled, in perfect tone,  
And talked to her when they were all alone.*

*Next to "Old Miss", Hank loved the children best,  
Who rode his bus along with all the rest.  
He gave them candy, showed them all the sights,  
Took them to school, and straightened out their fights.*

*One day the city's fifth grade history class  
Asked Hank to fill his shiny bus with gas  
And take them on an all-day trip to see  
Some spots that had to do with history.*

*Now Hank had never gone to school before,  
And as for history, he knew no more  
Than things he'd heard or seen from day to day.  
Now, to a fifth grade class, what could he say?*

*He scratched his head and patted "Missy's" hood.  
She glowed as if to say, of course they could.  
Hank grinned, because if "Missy" understood  
They'd make the trip; why, certainly they would.*

*The fifth grade class of little boys and girls  
(The boys with tousled hair, the girls with curls)  
Climbed all aboard and started out to see  
The promised spots of local history.*

*"Now, first we're going to the pyramids."  
Hank told the wide-eyed unbelieving kids.  
"Then next we'll see a coupla things in Rome  
And China; then I'd better take you home."*

*The fifth grade students from the city school  
Just laughed at Hank, and thought he was a fool.  
But after they rode on a mile or two—  
Guess what! The pyramids came into view!*

*They drove across the hot Sahara sand  
To see the Sphinx in all its splendor grand.  
They took time out beside the River Nile,  
Under the swaying palms, to rest a while.*

*Then off they rode; around a curve or so,  
And up a hill or two the bus did go.  
And then, on seven lofty hills o'erspread,  
Stood ancient Rome, the city that was dead.*



*Hank drove "Old Miss" quite carefully along,  
For in the streets was such a busy throng!  
He had to watch for chariots because  
They weren't contained in his insurance clause.*

*In Rome they watched a thrilling chariot race  
And had a picnic in the market place.  
Then off again, this time for old Cathay,  
Which wasn't very far along the way.*

*They passed a caravan of merchants bold  
Who journeyed to the land where silks were sold.  
They saw the rice fields, and great China's wall,  
And Kubla's palace, fairest of them all.*

*But the sun began to drop into the sea,  
And Hank said, "That's enough of history."  
So turning "Missy" around, he started back,  
And soon was on his old familiar track.*

*By dark he had the children safely home.  
To think! That day they'd really been to Rome!  
That night he tucked "Old Miss" in her garage,  
Inspecting her for scratches, small or large.*

*And then he patted her, then scratched his head.  
And this is just exactly what he said,  
"Old Miss", you've really proved your worth to me,  
'Cause we sure showed those kids some history."*

*"Old Miss" just smiled with all her polished chrome,  
And seemed content that they were safely home,  
She never made a trip like that again;  
Or if she did, I can't remember when.*

*Now all the children of that class are grown  
And they have fifth grade children of their own.  
Sometimes the children crowd around their knee  
To hear them tell of Hank and history.*

*But children of this ultra-modern age  
Have grown too sane, and much, oh, much too sage.  
So no one now, except a few of us,  
Believes the tale of Hank O'Malley's bus.*

—Carolyn Blakely



# Smith, Take A Walk

By JODY MANN

It wasn't that I was unhappy with the Friday night assignment the city editor gave me, as what sub-cub reporter at the foot of the payroll would have the gall to look askance at a command to mop the floor. I was happy all right, only I knew McClosky—that's the city ed—had lost his mind telling me to round up a little human interest material 'our there'. Out there is anywhere past hearing distance of the presses, and I'd never been let loose like that. To put it bluntly, I'd never been let loose at all beyond reports on juvenile court proceedings and its sub-group, obituaries—the same which require no brain work, only a pencil, the back of an envelope, and a reasonable savvy of the native tongue. But human interest! Eureka! I was being permitted to think by McClosky who knows I can't. My opinion on the subject is irrelevant, me being sub-cub reporter sliding off the nether end of the payroll.

"Smith," says McClosky—I'm not a Smith, but then neither are the other forty-nine sub-cubs that jump when McClosky bellows 'SMITH!'—"Smith, take a walk. Get human interest. Anything. Just get!"

"Yessir."

"And Smith—don't make it up! Your imagination just ain't!"

"Yessir."

In spite of the send-off, I swaggered into the street with a passionate feeling that my star was rising in the East. Always had been up there—just slow coming into focus. I'd show McClosky a thing or two—like how good I was at seeing something profound in simple stuff like flower pots. I'd dish out a little philosophy, and when my reading public'd take a gander at it in print—why, appreciative letters would pour in and plumb fill up the editorial page. Simple stuff—that's what appeals. My time had come. I shoved my hat to the back of my head, my hands into my pockets, and myself into Duffy's Bar on the corner. Plenty interest there, but it wasn't human. I left.

Must have been three-four hours I wandered up and down the drag, parking on park benches, and eavesdropping at drug store telephone booths. I found no humans being interesting. Figured my star was getting out of focus again when I spied the bus station and decided, "Eureka! I will try another town with another set of humans."

It wasn't a big bus station. This just isn't a big town. Nevertheless it was jammed and I couldn't hear myself think once I got inside. McClosky'd say I couldn't have if it had been dead silent. He likes to kid me. Anyway I walked up to the desk where a man was playing information bureau, ticket, gent, and timetable barker at the same time.

"When does the next bus leave?" I asked simply.

"Where for? Jacksonville! Daytona Beach! And points South!"—this last into the P.A. system.



I started to tell him Points South sounded like a nice place, but I just said, "I'm not particular."

"One in half an hour going North."

"Thanks."

Meanwhile he is smiling at me like I'm not all there, and I am having no intention of boarding the North-bound bus, for there across the waiting room I spotted two G.I.'s sitting back to back on the double row of benches—waiting. The sight of them struck me as something profound. Profoundly humanly interesting, let's call it since that's what I was looking for. Both of them were staring square out of the windows on either end of the bus station like—well, like they were lonesome. That's it, I decided. "They are decidedly lonesome, and that's pathetic." Pathos is an element of human interest, says paragraph c. page 275 of the journalism book, so how could I lose? I would write about two lonely soldiers for McClosky.

I patted the 4-F draft card in my hip pocket, and eased myself onto a bench across the aisle, from which I could stare at my inspiration without having my inspiration stare back. I thought hard. "Irony," I philosophized to myself, "that two G.I.'s wearing the same uniform—well, two uniforms just alike—and fighting for the same cause, sitting in the same bus station with nothing but the back of a bench separating them, and obviously in the same frame of mind—only one frame of mind makes a guy stare out a window when it's pitch dark on the other side of it—ironic that neither one knew the other was there." I was pleased with my analysis of the situation. McClosky had his nerve saying I missed out on imagination. Why, I had more than that! I had insight. Still my story wasn't pathetic enough. I'd have to lay it on thicker, so I thought to myself, "How much nicer it would be if the two G.I.'s could share their lonesomeness by staring out the same window, and swapping life stories, but fate had not decreed it for the two G.I.'s I had a bead on. They had come to the same place, established the blood kinship that comes from sitting on the same bus station bench for two hours, and would depart whenever their buses decided to show up, never knowing the other was there and could have relieved the lonesomeness. Eureka! What heart-breaking irony! I was ready to write my front page story for McClosky.

"Here it comes!"—from lonesome G.I. number 1.

"That's tough. So's the other one."—from lonesome G.I. number 2.

"Who yelled first?"

"You did."

"What was the deal?"

"If you saw the bus going North first, we'd go to the mountains, and if I saw the bus going South first, we'd go to the beach, but . . ."

"I yelled first. We go to the mountains."

They walked out the door slapping each other on the back, and I wrote a human interest story on a sub-cub whose imagination just ain't. It was so pathetic that McClosky ran it.



# Before It Is Too Late

By BILLIE JONES

"Fish."

"Vbih."

"Funny."

"Vuddy."

"Fall."

"Vbaw."

"Fine."

"Vbighb."

"All right, Bob, that's fine. Time's up for today. How's that baseball team?"

"O Gay. Be bead eberbody dish beag n-so par."

"Well, isn't that wonderful! What position did you say you played?"

"Gadcher."

"Sure, I remember. Well, you practice hard, and I bet that team of yours will be the city champ."

"I hobe so. W-w-bell, n-see you, Turznda."

"Goodbye, Bob."

"Bye."

That was Bob Green. Nationality? American. What's wrong with him? In the speech clinic at Wesleyan Conservatory we call it—ARTICULATORY.

I remember the first day he came. He was fat, hot, and sweaty. Dirt was streaked on his face, and his grimy tee shirt clung to his shoulders and back. His pants and shoes were dusty. He was such an unattractive sight that it was hard to realize there was a little boy there under it all.

He rose from the white bench in the hall and shuffled toward me with awkward, heavy steps.

"Hello. Were you waiting to see Miss Jordan?" I asked him.

"-O. Beh, by bwand do dak beh-er."

"All right, suppose you come in this room over here, and tell me all about it."

We went into one of the clinic rooms and sat down.

"Now, what's your name?"

"Ba D-gree."

"How old are you?"

"Ebven; I'mbuh id duh vbiv d-gra."

"Uh-huh. While we're waiting for Miss Jordan, I'll check the file and see when we can schedule you for lessons."

While I was doing this I had him fill out some information blanks. I couldn't understand enough of what he said to fill them out myself. I learned from them that his name was Bob Green, eleven years old, fifth grade.

## TICKETS FOR TWO

A woman boarded the plane at the last possible moment before it took-off from Chicago. She was the kind of woman whose very presence compelled the other passengers to stare at her. A fashion classic, she wore a black suit whose beautifully simple lines announced its expensiveness. She glided regally down the aisle, and, finding her seat beside a young girl in a gray suit, she did not even stop to put down her coat before she searched out the stewardess.

"Stewardess! I want another seat."

"Ma'am?"

"Don't be dense! I do not want to sit in the seat assigned to me."

"Which seat is that?"

"Seat 14. My son bought the reservation for me, and it is quite unsatisfactory."

"I'm sorry, ma'am, but that is impossible if your reservation is for . . ."

"Really now, this is ridiculous! Reservation or no reservation, I see no reason why I should have to endure that nondescript creature who brazenly occupies seat 15 next to mine. She could not, I am sure, supply any sort of intellectual or cultural stimulation—not even entertain me for two hours. I demand that something be done immediately."

There was no other seat on the plane and the pilot signaled the take-off. The stewardess managed, though with some difficulty, to get the woman into her reserved seat in time to fasten her safety belt. After the plane was in the air, the woman lifted her disdainful nose a little higher, smoothed her skirt, and intently began to read her *New Yorker*.

"Are you going far?" asked the girl beside her.

"I beg your pardon!"

"Said, have you far to go?" she tried again.

"No farther than New York, thank heaven!"

"Don't you like to travel?"

"I *thrive* on travel!"

"Oh." The girl was silent for awhile. Then she made another attempt. "Have you been in Chicago long?"

"A day or so. No one place can hold me for much longer than that," the woman answered without looking up.

"Then you must have traveled simply everywhere. How fascinating!"

"Yes. Isn't it?"

"But don't you have a home or a family?"

"Sometime or other I did acquire a son. But he tired of my flighty ways long ago. He says he's going to settle down. What a farce! I tell him he'll never like that kind of life. He has such strange ideas. All young people do. Even I was quite a young Bohemian in my day."

"Were you really?"

"And now I've descended into a fanatical patron of the arts. Do you happen to know anything about painting?"

"I painted some when I was young. Flowers, landscapes, that sort of thing. And I . . ."



"Quite outmoded now, you know. After all, modernistic art is simply the only thing these days. Those sensitive guitar and newspaper compositions of Picasso . . . dee-vine! You really must cultivate the arts, my dear!"

"Er, yes! Are you going to any plays while you're in New York?"

"Of course. It's imperative that anybody who is anybody at all patronize the legitimate stage, you know."

"Yes. Well, don't let me keep you from your magazine. Go right ahead. I don't mind."

For over an hour the woman and the young girl were both quiet, the woman absorbed in the *New Yorker*, the girl in her thoughts. Suddenly the plane lurched.

"Eu-u-u, what was that?" the girl asked.

"An airpocket, of course. Haven't you ever flown before?" inquired the woman to confirm her observations.

"Well, no, I haven't. In fact, I wouldn't be flying now if my fiance hadn't sent me the plane ticket. He's meeting me."

"Is that so? Are you going to marry him when you get to New York?"

"I'm not quite sure. When he sent me the plane ticket, he wrote that when I arrived in New York, I would know why he wanted me to marry him. And he said we'd fly to Nassau for our honeymoon. But my parents . . ."

"Is he good enough for you? Financially and socially, I mean."

"Oh, yes, much too good in those ways."

"Then pay them no mind and marry the boy. After you've done it, they'll be glad you were smart enough to get what you wanted."

"It isn't *my* family that worries me. It's his. He hasn't told me how they feel. I haven't even met them."

"Look here. If he'll marry you, then go ahead and hook him while you can. There'll be nothing they can do even if they don't approve. And you'll be set for the rest of your life. That's what I did, and look at me."

"I suppose you're right."

"Of course I am. Look, we're about to land in New York. Don't forget what I told you."

"I won't. Thank you very much."

A young man in the airport below paced the waiting room floor.

"Chicago plane landing on runway three," the loudspeaker announced.

The young man tore up the two pieces of paper he had folded and unfolded for the past hour. The shreds which drifted down into the trash can were the remains of Chicago-to-New York reservation stubs, seats 14 and 15.

As he went out into the darkness to meet the plane, he took other reservations from his coat pocket. New York to Nassau, for two.

—Charlotte Battle

# Drums of Time

Man drummed wierd drums of long ago,  
Beating sticks and hollow logs,  
Pounding stones  
Shaking bones  
Thumping canes from bubbling bogs,  
Thwacking mounds  
Stamping sounds  
Swirling wildness from the fogs.  
By these drums plund'ring man perceived  
To break suns  
From their ones  
Breaching morn and noon and eve  
Copied thunder  
Split asunder  
Swamp-fire's breathing when they breathed.

Then, in the age when he made  
A water clock of clay  
He began to unspan  
The seasons of the day  
By the dripping of drops  
Beneath the crude scaled pot  
And began then to obey  
The ruling of that slot.

Then he learned to prison sands  
In its fused-form, glass, he sheathed it,  
And in hour by hour obeisance  
Drew his shackles closer to him.  
And so down and down and down the ages  
In his vision bent and shrunken  
In his watchfulness small and drunken  
Man has drawn the life from living.

So today he lives in clamor  
Lives in shells and heat and speed  
Heat and speed and panting  
From the trampling rush of time.  
And he thinks no more of dreaming  
For in dreams he drifts in fear  
That his neatly tabled schedules  
Rise and charge, blus and scream  
Like a ghost-dream come to haunt him  
In his time marked out for sleep.



*Yet, today, though seldom indeed  
There springs a life whose soul is free  
Who dares to draw himself away  
Who frees himself to drift and fly,  
To seek the place where the view is broad,  
And life in light of truth.  
He seeks the drums as first they beat  
In freedom, joy and love and tears,  
He knows no love in purring bolts  
Or in the graceful arch of metal hands  
He seeks back, far back in life  
To trace the ancient freedom's drum  
and finds*

*. . . A heartbeat.*

—David Knowles

## Time for the Blues

Blues are funny things to have. Often they're unpredictable, appearing unannounced in the midst of a sunny day. They linger gloomily, then slide away just as silently as they came, leaving no trace of their presence. Then again, a time will summon a particular case of the blues, and you, ". . . can feel them coming on you,"—coming because the time is right—coming because you want them to.

Such a time is a late spring evening in a mauve and rose twilight, with just enough breeze passing by to brush against the tree leaves and leave them hovering against one another. Your blue mood is of a soft, velvet hue, the soothing but sweet, painful kind of blue that means you're in love—or you want to be in love—or you're just pleasantly alone.

Perhaps time won't allow for the blues as you hurry down a crowded street, or pull up along side another car in a line of traffic, yet from a distant radio you'll catch a snatch of a song you haven't heard in a long time—just enough to send memories tumbling over themselves.

they'll come back so fast. And you'll pause for a moment, smile a little to yourself as you think back to what a wonderful night that was, then give your head a shake—along with a tiny sigh—and move back into the rush of a hastening world. And whether or not there was time, you'll have just had a lightning-quick case of the blues—tinted with purple.

Then there're the electric shadows of red or yellow tinging the blues that come every night to the throaty-voiced girl crooning in a smoke-filled room. Through the tinkle of ice in glasses, through the bass, rumbling undercurrent of voices, she moans to disinterested women and men with gleaming, appraising eyes. She cannot choose the time for her blues, but must stand alone, bathed in a disc of hot yellow light, regardless of real emotion.

A case of the blues that's soulfully expressed comes at a time when few are witnesses. A long narrow room that's a night club is empty now of gay, dissipated people except for the stale air which retains the smells of perfume, cigarette smoke, and whiskey. Two negro men still sit on the black patch that's a bandstand. While one at a sawed-off piano thumps out a rhythm you can feel to your bones, the other lets go of his blues through his now-muted, now-blaring, but always-singing, trumpet. They pour upon the deserted room with the mellowness, the sweetness that only a negro jazz man can send through that horn. The dim grey of dawn creeps around him, the smoke still clings to the ceiling, but his black face gleaming with perspiration reflects his exhilaration as he blows out the blues.

Sometimes, the bad blues get you. They're misty yet they're engulfing. Almost as if a thin, spidery net of steel had been thrown around you. You beat against them, but they won't yield. Instead, they push inward as cruel and as sharp as ice cold needles jabbed in your flesh.

And the times when you're tired, and despair seems to have you clutched in its hairy fist, your blue mood will be as lonesome and as hollow as a train whistle shrieking hoarsely in a dead night, echoing again and again, then fading into nothingness.

There're all kinds of blues because time brings all kinds of moods. But the best blues come when it rains, when it's cold—but you're snug inside—warm and dry. You toast yourself before a friendly fire, you taste the rich sweetness of hot chocolate as it rolls across your tongue and slides down your throat. Then you lean back, and you dream. It's a lavender-blue mood—and it's enjoyable. That's the kind of blues that's really good to have, for it brings a glow and a satisfaction that no high-spirited joyousness will ever be able to reach.

The right time will always come.

—Ann Armistead



# The Cat Who Went To College

Geoffrey was just about the most intellectual cat you or I or anybody has ever seen. In fact he was so smart that life simply bored him to death. There was nothing, absolutely nothing to do. Day after day he sat on the front porch steps watching the cars, trucks, and buses zip up and down the highway. Sometimes he hummed themes from symphonies he had heard over the radio or recited poetry, but the monotony was still overwhelming.

None of the other cats in the neighborhood would have anything to do with Geoffrey. They whispered among themselves that he was uppity and snooty. But really, he was just entirely too smart for them.

"Plebeians," muttered Geoffrey as they hunched themselves by the front porch every day.

Poor Geoffrey. Nobody knew how perspicacious he was. If they did, they probably would have been ashamed of themselves. There was one thing Geoffrey had always wanted to do and that was to go to college. When the traffic was not so dense on the highway in front of the house, he would sit and lick his right hind paw, dreaming of college. The more

people inside the door that led to the front porch or any of the other people who lived by the highway that went past the front porch. Why, they didn't even know he was bilingual (Cattish and English). Besides THEY wouldn't admit to hearing a cat talk. It was so easy to be tagged neurotic—or worse, psychotic!

One day when there were few cars, trucks, and buses on the road, Geoffrey was sitting on the front porch steps humming the theme from the fourth movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and thinking very, very hard about college. Suddenly he stopped humming; he flipped his yellow tail on the floor delightedly.

"Eureka! I have it!" he exclaimed. "I will discover who the smartest man in this state is. He will let me go to college."

For many weeks Geoffrey listened to the radio, watched television and even read the newspapers until he was so fatigued he could hardly twitch a whisker. He was about to give up when one day he heard the man who lived behind the screen door that led to the front porch talking to his wife.

"I tell you," shouted the man, "the smartest man in this state is our governor. Didn't I vote for him and didn't he give me my job?"

"Aha!" cried Geoffrey. "I will go to see the governor of this state."

But still Geoffrey was worried. How was he, a cat, going to get to the state capitol to see the governor? He sat on the steps and worried





some more as he watched the cars, trucks, and buses whiz by. At last when he had been thinking for exactly two hours, thirty-three minutes, and twenty-nine seconds an idea occurred to him.

"I am truly a smart cat to have thought of this," he said. "Tomorrow I shall ride one of the buses, that passes by the front porch on the highway, to the capital city."

Early the next morning Geoffrey walked sedately down the highway until he came to the town where the bus station was. Pretty soon a bus with the name of the capital city written across its front in neon letters drew up to the curb. Before the bus could reload, Geoffrey had jumped on and hidden under a seat. Not even the bus driver, Hiram Jones, who had been with the bus company for seventeen years, saw him get on.

The trip was not a very interesting one because Geoffrey could not see a single solitary thing except two pairs of feet encased in saddle oxfords. He turned up his nose distastefully at them.

"I must bear this suffering gracefully," he told himself. "After all, I must think about my great future."

Each time the bus jogged to a stop, Geoffrey would think it was time for him to get off. Finally Hiram Jones, who was very proud of his job because he had driven a bus for seventeen years, stopped the bus right in front of the capitol building and said, "All passengers who wish to get off here may do so now."

Before Hiram Jones could catch his breath, Geoffrey was out of the bus in a yellow streak. Two of the people asked what he was, but as none of the other passengers had seen Geoffrey, they soon were silent. They didn't want to be accused of having hallucinations.

Inside the capitol, Geoffrey walked up and down the long corridors until he saw a door with THE GOVERNOR painted in shiny black letters on it. He sat outside the door until it opened and a very important looking man with a leather briefcase strode out. As the man came out, Geoffrey dashed past him, past the governor's secretary and all the other people in the room and landed plop! right in the middle of the governor's office. (A very undignified entrance for Geoffrey.)

"W-e-e-e-elllll," drawled the governor from behind a mahogany desk, five telephones, a black cigar, and a handpainted tie, "What can I do for you, pussy cat?"

"In the first place," answered Geoffrey smoothing his yellow fur, "My name is Geoffrey, and secondly, I wish to attend college."

"I see," said the governor, who was not the least bit surprised to hear a cat talk, because he was the smartest man in the state and not afraid of what other people might say.

"Have a seat and tell me your qualifications," said the governor through a cloud of smoke from his black cigar.

"I have no formal schooling, if that is what you mean," answered Geoffrey, seating himself on a red leather chair. "But you may quiz me if you wish."



"Very well," said the governor adjusting his handpainted tie. "What is the square root of 3969?"

"Sixty-three," said Geoffrey with a sniff.

"Correct. Who said, 'These are the times that try men's souls?'"

"Thomas Paine in THE AMERICAN CRISIS," answered Geoffrey.

The governor asked Geoffrey every question he could think of, but Geoffrey always knew the answers.

"Hrrrrrrrrrump!" said the governor when he had finished his third black cigar. "You are indeed a smart cat. I shall call the president of the State University. I gave him his job. He will let you go to college."

With that, he picked up one of the five telephones on his mahogany desk. Soon he was talking to the president of the State University in a great booming voice.

"That you, Charlie? . . . This is Slim. Listen, Charlie. I got a cat up here that wants to go to college. . . . That's what I said, cat, c-a-t, name's Geoffrey. . . . I don't care how silly it sounds. I'm the governor and you do as I say! He'll be there today."

"Well, it's all arranged," smiled the governor, lighting another black cigar as he banged the telephone receiver down. "You will be enrolled in the State University, and I will take you there myself."

Geoffrey was the happiest cat in the whole state. No longer would he have to sit on the front porch watching the cars, trucks, and buses flash up and down the highway; no longer would he have to watch the other cats hunch themselves by the front porch.

"My appreciation is inexpressable," said Geoffrey, gravely shaking the governor's hand as they rose to leave for the state university.

And that is how Geoffrey, the cat, went to college. He was so brilliant that he finished the entire four year course in two and a half years. Rumors are, he is planning to enter Harvard this next autumn.

Poor Hiram Jones, who had driven a bus for seventeen years! He never knew he had celebrity riding with him. —Peggy Stiles

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### IN TIME

*My love, I know how that I may charm  
Your heart to loving me. I love you well  
And in my love I fear that I may harm  
My own cause. Why must ignorance thus dwell  
With me before the thing that I want most?  
Why must I, loving, fail to call Love forth?  
Perhaps I'm childish, for there is a host  
Of childish things I do. I am not worth,  
Perhaps, the love I hold. Yet still I stay  
With puzzled mind and heart and naive face.  
In desperation wishing that some day  
I, too, shall learn the ever-charming ways  
Of love. I do not know, my love, I cannot tell  
These things, but ever I shall love you well.*

—J. Baxter

## SINGING WIRES

I rode all day and all night on the bus. And all the next day. It was that day I got to thinking. Before then I'd shut out thought; now I wanted it to come. I wanted to get away from the things I wouldn't think. So I looked at the houses we passed and I thought about the people that lived in them.

Then, for the first time, I noticed the wires. Telephone wires. Ever notice how many miles of telephone wire you look at from the window of a bus? That's how it started. Wires, I thought, singing wires.

We passed a small, brick house and I thought of a little girl and what the telephone might be bringing to her.

"H-hello, is Jimmy there?"

"This is Jimmy. Say, who's this?"

"This is Joan."

"Joan—Joan who?"

"Joan Young—you remember me, don't you? I sit back of you in algebra."

"Oh, yeah. Sure! Uh, what can I do for you?"

"I was wondering if you could tell me the algebra assignment for yesterday. I'd like to do it before I leave for school."

"Gee, no, I'm sorry. I slept in class yesterday."

"You—you did? Gosh!"

"Sure, that teacher's stupid anyway."

"You're wonderful."

"I am? I mean—Joan, are you doing anything tonight?"

"Golly, I don't—no."

"Well, how about taking in a show?"

"I'd love to Jimmy."

"Well, so long, pick you up at 8:00."

"O. K. G'bye."

"G'bye."

It struck me as funny just thinking about it. I felt it was happening right then. Funny as H——. Pardon me, lady. Funny, you know what I mean?

But I'm a dreamer by nature, I guess. So we passed a brownstone and before you know it, I was thinking again. Maybe two old gossips—

"Jane, have you heard about John Brown?"

"Who, dear?"

"John Brown."

"No, what's the news?"

"He's very sick. They think it's cancer."

"No!"

"I hear Emma is beside herself."

"Tch, tch, tch. I must speak to her. Oh, Melissa, I *knew* I had some news. Just wait 'til you hear."

"What?"

"You'll die."



"Hurry, dear."

"I will, but remember, it's in strictest confidence."

"Well—Jack and Judy are going to get a——"

"Divorce?"

"Yes, dear."

"Jane, how in the world did you find out?"

"Well, someone told Tilda, and she phoned me, and naturally, I called you as soon as could."

"I'm so glad you did! Well, really, I'm in a frightful rush. I *have* to phone Martha."

"Now, Melissa. I heard it first. If anyone tells Martha I should."

"I don't understand *what* you mean. I'm very busy. Goodbye."

"Hmph. Goodbye."

Yeah, that's the way it goes from ear to mouth to ear. And some people wonder how the telephone company makes money? Me, I wonder how some people make the money to foot their telephone bills.

Then I got to thinking about Emma Brown, the one with the sick husband they were just talking about. She might live down the road here in the little brown shack. Emma Brown—and cancer in her house.

Busy, busy, busy. That word sounds over and over in her head. She clasps her hands together and speaks sharply to herself.

"Now, Emma, you've got to be quiet and calm and everything will be all right. You mustn't let him know you're scared just because the line is busy and you can't get the doctor.—Dang busy bodies, I wish they'd get off the phone and quit their infernal gossiping. I'd better try again. Oh,—busy, busy, BUSY. And it's so pitiful to see him lying there not wantin' even me any more."

She turns toward the bedroom and looks through the door at the wasted form lying on the iron bed. She moves slowly toward it, and, reaching his side, she picks up one thin, calloused hand and holds it—tight.

"John, John, dear, can you hear me? I think you're giving up. John, but you mustn't—not 'til the doctor's here. Oh, Johnny, is the pain very bad?" She gasps and leans over the bed. "John, can you hear me?"

She barely discerns the nod of his head. Out into the hall once more, quickly. She crosses to the phone, lifts the receiver. The line is clear! After a few moments of hurried conversation, she replaces the receiver. One gnarled hand blesses the telephone as she says in a voice of relief.

"See, John, I told you the doctor was comin'."

I don't know about you, but it made me feel a lot better. Not so sorry for myself, you know. All that day I looked at houses and thought of people. And it wasn't until a long time later that it came to me. I'd forgotten about myself and my own troubles, for a long time. When I got off the bus at Chicago, I waved it goodbye. Nice trip. I'd miss the miles of singing wires.

—Marilyn Shapiro—



# WHAT HAPPENED TO MIKE

By FRANCES DREW

Mike was a bus driver out on the Forestdale route. Every morning he'd get out his green and yellow Transit Company vehicle and fill it up with gas and start out. Sometimes he would get a new sign to put on the front. He always liked the ones that advertised sales because Molly would see them when he drove by their house, and she always hated to miss a sale. His round trip was scheduled for an hour, with a ten minute rest at the end of the line by the country club,—but if there was anyone out there playing golf, he was usually late going back: he'd get so interested that he couldn't leave until they had gone to the next hole.

And people interested him: he liked to see "how life was treating them every day", as he expressed it. Molly was always asking him why he didn't get a job that would pay more, but he'd always shake his head: he didn't know of anything else a man could do where he would meet people and share their problems, and if he kept at it long enough, he might get to be a supervisor in the company. Besides it was interesting how friendly people would get even though there was a sign above his head telling them not to talk to him while the bus was in motion: anyone got on asked about Molly, and his thoughts about the weather, and politics, and inflation; and whether they were pro or con, he'd always take the middle road—that way, the conversation would last all the way downtown. They all liked to tell him where they were going and why, and to be sure to wait for them on such-and-such a trip. He really enjoyed his work: people getting on or off at the school, the churches, the shopping district, the Forestdale Hospital, the train depot,—they all had something interesting about them, even if he didn't know them. And Mike never had to say, "Step to the rear of the car, please," or "Keep behind the yellow line", because they did it anyway.

But one day last week, Mike just drove his bus right by every stop with all those people waiting to get on, like he didn't see them. In fact, he never even slowed down. It caused Mrs. Browne to miss her appointment at the beauty shop, and Mrs. Adams didn't get to town to shop and meet her husband for lunch, and Aunt Susie Parsons had some flowers for the church that almost withered, while Jeff Aiken's wife was having a baby, and he didn't get to the hospital until after it had come. Not a one of them could understand what had happened to Mike. The Transit Company didn't know either. Finally, after a lot of telephone calls, they put a special bus on the route and sent an investigator out to see what was going on.

Sam Robinson, investigator, followed the route all the way out to the country club; he was almost back to town when he saw the bus parked near the emergency entrance to Forestdale Hospital. Could something have happened to Mike? Robinson was at the information desk in the entrance hall within minutes. He found the place full of newsmen.

Yes, there was a Mike O'Brien there . . . No, there was nothing wrong with him . . . No, he was down the hall . . . It would probably take



a while longer—you never could tell about these operations . . . Oh, no, it was not Mike's wife . . . Please, would the gentlemen have a seat? He would be called as soon as Mike could see him . . . Of course, he could use the telephone; it was across the hall in that little booth . . .

So Robinson checked in at the office and sat down to wait. He had crossed and recrossed his legs, smoked half a pack of cigarettes, thumbed through all the magazines in the rack, and watched the clock hands crawl by another hour, before the swinging doors at the end of the hall opened. Mike and a doctor came through. Mike looked white and shaken and the doctor was pulling off a surgical mask. Robinson stood up as they came toward him.

"You'd better sit here awhile", the doctor said to Mike. "If I were you, I'd spend the afternoon resting up. And don't do anything too strenuous for several days."

"Okay," Mike said. Then he introduced him to Robinson. When Robinson had been introduced, Mike tried to explain things to him. But by that time, flashbulbs were going off, and reporters' pencils were scratching away, recording every word that was said. Would Mike like to tell his story to the press? Yes, he would. So Mike and the doctor and Robinson sat down on the sofa.

Mike told them about how he had come upon the accident near the country club—up that little side road that leads to Highway 15—a car, going too fast, had run into a boy on a bicycle . . . No, there weren't any houses near and it was right early in the morning for much traffic . . . The boy was pretty badly hurt, all unconscious and bruised up, so he figured he'd better not wait to get help . . . Yes, there was a man in the car, so scared and dazed he acted drunk . . . Well, he picked up the boy and put him on the floor of the bus. When he got the man in, too, he turned around and went as fast as he could to the hospital—with a cop after him all the way . . . The doctor said he'd have to operate right away to set the compound fractures and asked if Mike would give some blood. Was he the right type? . . . Yes, he was . . . Shucks, he hadn't done any more than anyone else would have done.

But Dr. Moreland had something to say about that: *he* said that Mike's quick actions had saved the boy's life . . . Who was he? Judge Wallace's son, James . . . What was he doing? The Judge said he was going fishing . . . Well, he just wanted to say that Mike was a hero.

Mike just sat there and looked uncomfortable.

Well, I guess that's about all there is to this story, except that the newspapers made a lot over him. They put his picture on the front page with big headlines about how he had saved James Wallace's life. The last paragraph of the account said:

"The Central Transit Company, Mike's employers, presented him with a gold medal at his home yesterday afternoon, and a promotion to the office of assistant supervisor. But Mike just shook his head; he didn't want to leave his bus route and all those friendly people."



# The Time Has Come

A modern Wesleyanne sat in the student parlor, her feet on a small table before her, her nose buried in a *Reader's Digest* dated May 1951.

"Before Sunday, November 18, 1883," it read, "every community in the United States had its own local time, and was proud of it. Worse, each of the 500 railroads had its own time . . . and ran on it. A watch was a delusion, a timetable a confusion 500 times confounded."

The Wesleyanne chuckled to herself. "I've got a mental picture of that," she murmured. "It would start right here in this parlor in May of 1881 . . ."

The old fashioned Wesleyanne smiled shyly at the handsome young man beside her. "Mother will never allow it," she said. "What would she say if she could see me sitting here now, holding your hand?"

"It doesn't matter what she would say about it, Darling. I want to know what you have to say about it."

"Oh, I rather like it. Your hand is so big and strong!"

"I'm not talking about holding hands. I mean what have you to say to marrying me? I don't want to just hold hands with you for the rest of your life . . . I want to kiss you too."

"Oh, Jim, you mustn't say things like that to me before we're engaged."

"Then let's get engaged. You do love me, don't you?"

"Yes, but . . . Mother wouldn't . . ."

"Now look, Nancy . . . I want to marry *you*, not your mother."

"I know, Dear, er . . . I mean Jim, but you know Mother wanted me to marry Throckmorton."

"Do you want to?"

"Oh no! I want to marry you. Jim . . . stop it."

There is a moment's silence as he seals their engagement with a kiss.

"Oh, Jim, I love you, but we might as well face it now. I can't marry you."

"Look, Dearest, (another kiss) you're no longer a child and you're old enough to make your own decisions. We'll get married and not consult your mother."

"What do you mean? Mother would be sure to know. She's coming up to my graduation tomorrow and we can't possibly get married before then, can we?"

"No, and we don't need to. Here's what we'll do. You're going home right after graduation, aren't you?" (Still another kiss or maybe two or three.)

"Yes, we're taking the train home at three o'clock Macon time . . . that's four thirty Southern railway time I think. Anyway it's at three thirty by my watch."

"Well, you go ahead and graduate and I'll go on up to Griffin and



when the train stops at Griffin you say you're going to the eh . . . the . . . eh . . ."

"Yes, yes, I understand . . . goon."

"You're sweet. (Four kisses this time). Anyway you leave your mother a note there and then get off the train. I'll be waiting for you. We'll get married and then go on to Atlanta the next day and break the news to her. Let's see, if you leave Macon at three then you'll get to Griffin around five-thirty. That would be six o'clock Griffin time and four-thirty by my watch."

"No, dear. There I go calling you dear again. (One more kiss.) You're mistaken. We get into Griffin at six o'clock train time and that makes it five o'clock by your watch. See, our watches are only an hour apart, so that's bound to be right."

"Now look, I took more mathematics in school than you did and I've got this thing figured right. I'll meet the train at six o'clock Griffin time and I'll bet that will be just right."

"Indeed it won't and I refuse to stand there thirty minutes waiting for you."

"Well, indeed and haven't I waited two years for you to get an education? Of all silly things for a woman!"

"It is not silly," and she burst into tears like a true Wesleyanne.

"Now there, there, Darling. Don't cry. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings."

"Oh, Jim, we'll never get together on the time. We'll always be just missing each other and I'll have to marry Throckmorton."

"No, you shall not. I'll see to that?"

"Where're we going?"

"To wire your mother that we're getting married at 8:30 tonight."

"But she'll come down and stop us."

"I don't know about you . . . but nothing can stop me. I've waited two years for you and that's long enough."

"I don't know about me either. She's my mother, you know."

And so the telegram flew to Atlanta. "Am marrying Jim at 8:30. Wish you could be here. Love, Nancy."

Mrs. Stacy emerged from her pink and blue boudoir and sailed down the hall to her husband's study. "Gregory," she shouted. "Gregory, come here at once. Nancy's going to marry that dreadful Jim unless we stop them right away. What time does the next train leave for Macon?"

Mr. Stacy glanced up at his wife. "What's so dreadful about Jim and what's wrong with an elopement? They're just as married. And think of all the headaches we're saved! Three big weddings were enough. Let Nancy get married if she wants to."

Mrs. Stacy glared at her husband. "Stop rationalizing and tell me about the trains. You know very well I had practically promised Mrs. Gladfield that Nancy would marry Throckmorton. You just don't care a hoot about what people will say. Nancy eloping! I'll never be able to face the club again. I . . ."

"Okay, okay, here's a time table for the Southern Railway . . . you find out about your train."

"Now, Gregory, you know very well I never could read those things. Doesn't it say here that the 5:30 train gets to Macon at 8:00 o'clock? That's just in time to stop this foolishness."

At 8:30 Macon time Nancy and Jim took the vows that made them man and wife and fifteen minutes later, by Nancy's watch, Mrs. Stacy arrived in Macon. It was 8:00 o'clock Southern train time, too late to do more than wish her daughter and new son a very happy life.

The modern Wesleyanne sighed as she pictured them walking out together. Mrs. Stacy, between the young people, reconciled by the fact that Jim after all was a nice looking man. But there was a motherly tear in her eye. "I would have stopped you two," she was saying, "if it hadn't been for getting mixed up on the time."

"Hi, Butch," the sound dispelled the picture and the modern Wesleyan looked up into the face of her own Jim.

"Well, it's about time," she said. "It's a good thing we're not getting married at church or you would have kept me waiting at the church."

"I've got a surprise for you, Darling," Jim said leaning down to kiss her. "Your mother's here."

"What!" screeched our Wesleyanne, leaping to her feet, "She's not due 'til tomorrow for graduation."

"I know, Dear," he said, "but it didn't seem right to get married without her here, so I wired her yesterday to catch the 5:30 train and it got here just in time."

"Oh, Jim, it's so unromantic having your mother along on an elopement. Especially when she doesn't want me to marry you."

"That's a lot of nonsense that's just been in your own little romantic head all along, silly. Your Mother says you're old enough to make up your own mind and, if I'm what you want, then she's willing."

"How disagreeable of her to be so agreeable! It's so unromantic."

"Nancy!"

"I wish I had been born before 1883."

"What ever makes you say that?"

"Oh, nothing." As they walked out of the student parlor the May-1951, *Reader's Digest* dropped unnoticed to the floor.

—Anne McKay

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## Time 9:57 a. m.

I checked the time once more. It was 9:57 AM. My hands clasped the shiny stopwatch tightly as if I were trying to transfer some of the tension of my mind and body to the cool piece of metal. All around me there was an atmosphere of waiting and quiet preparation. The large studio was crowded with technicians and the people who would partici-



pate on the program. The two cameramen were making last minute checks on their cameras. The man who operated the lager boom microphone was already on his perch high above the studio floor. The four sets of lights above the area that would be televised were being adjusted for the last time. The cameramen, the stage manager, and the other workers were just beginning another day's work, but we were just before stepping into an entirely new and fascinating world . . . the fabulous world of television. We were part of an experiment, and I felt very much like a guinea pig as I watched the red second hand of the studio clock tick off the last few minutes. I silently wished that it were now 10:28 AM instead 9:58 as the clock told me, for then it would all be over.

In the next few seconds I relived all the preparations for the time. I thought of the rehearsals, the bus trip to Atlanta that morning in the glow of the sunrise, the terror that had struck in my heart when I realized that I was the person in charge of our little group. I remembered my teacher's final pat on the back, and her assurance that all would go well. I hoped and prayed that confidence would be justified.

9:59 and twenty seconds. The person who would open the show was in position and the cameras were focused on her. There was nothing more that I could do. I immediately thought of a thousand things that I needed to tell her. But the zero hour had come. It was now 10:00 AM, and she was on the television screens all over the area that this particular station covered. I pushed down the plunger on top of the stopwatch that set it into motion. We were off, and I hoped with all my heart that this would be a good day for our particular race, anyway.

My eyes were momentarily torn away from the stopwatch to watch in wonder as the stagemanager, who stood between the two cameras, talked by way of a tiny mouthpiece and headphones to the producer in the control room. The men on the cameras also wore headphones, and they responded instantly to the directions they got from the control room.

A quick glance at the watch told me that the time was now 10:14. All was going beautifully. I was a little ashamed that I had been so apprehensive about the program. My chief function on this trip had been to stay calm, cool and collected, and to calm any fears that might arise in the hearts of those who would be before the cameras. Actually, I had been more nervous than any of them. I had done my best not to let the state of my nerves show, but if I succeeded I know that was the best acting job of the year. When the stopwatch began to slip in my damp palm, and a trickle of cold sweat down my temple, I knew that I was having a case of nerves unlike anything I'd ever known before.

Then, almost before I knew what had happened, it was 10:27. One more minute and it would all be over. We would have completed our part of the experiment and I would push the plunger on the stopwatch once more . . . this time to stop it. We would be novices before the television cameras no more. This had really been a baptism in fire, but we had come out unsinged. Only my nerves were any the worse for wear.

—Jerrie Thompson



# Carpe Diem

The well-dressed lady nervously consults her watch; the shabby old man looks up at the clock on the wall; the little girl with stubby pigtailed asks, "When will the bus get here? What time is it now, Mother?" Everyone waits, his thoughts, actions, and life dependent on the movement of the passionless black hands. "Bus-now-loading-track- three-Augusta-Orangeburg-Raleigh-Richmond-Washington-New York-and Boston." Some of the people jump up and hurry out; the rest settle down to wait again.

The girl in the crisp organdy dress opens and closes her handbag, her pale hands fumbling with the clasp. A slight breeze fans the oily air of the concourse, blowing her shining hair awry. She smiles bravely up at the sailor in the bus, as they mouth useless and incomprehensible words through the window, interspersing this last minute conversation with pantomime. Then, with a roar and a cloud of asphyxiating fumes, the bus is gone, he is gone, and she is left with nothing but the touch of his hand.

She turns quickly and goes back into the station, where the tyrannical clock ticks on, marking now hours until he will return, which she would eradicate; where before she would have had them last forever. She thinks of moments wasted, the twenty minutes she spent primping in front of the mirror when she could have been with him, the hour she spent resting before the dance when she could have been with him, the foolish minutes spent arguing over little things. She longs to live the weekend over, filling in those squandered moments.

Back in the station a middle-aged woman, in baggy navy blue crepe, sits staring out from under her tired hat. She thinks of the funeral; of the flowers, the organ music, of her dead brother. She shakes her head apathetically, wondering why she hadn't found a way to come last week when they told her he had had an attack, why she didn't manage to see him one more time. She sees herself feeding the chickens and stringing the beans when she could have been talking to him, or just making him some soup. A tear threatens, and is gone as she shakes her head again.

Two soldiers sit side by side, not speaking. The tall one thinks of his wife; tomorrow she goes to court and will demand custody of the little boy. He wonders how things would have turned out if he had appreciated her then as he does now. He wants to take their happy moments with him and tries to remember what she said when he proposed, but the scene is blurred. He lights another cigarette. His buddy thinks of his mother, recalling the kitchen and glasses of milk. He wishes he had stayed home last night and talked with her. The party seemed so important then, but now he wonders what she would have said about it all; there just wasn't time. He, too, lights a cigarette.

An orphan gazes into space, her face an habitually unrevealing mask. Her suitcase is beside her, where she can touch it with her leg to reassure herself. Within it are her letter paper, her diploma, and her most business-



like clothes for the new job. She remembers the room she could go into and close the door, and wishes she had stayed there more. She remembers the three meals a day and wishes she had appreciated their certainty more. She remembers everything, and, cowardly, wishes she need not go on, but might live again those halcyon years.

An old man with silvery hair looks at the pattern on the tile floor. His neat hands hold his worn briefcase on his lap. He, too, remembers; he, too, regrets. He mutters softly, "Seize the day!" He shifts his gaze to the ceiling and seems to see the mingled thoughts of all the travelers, tumbled about in unhappy confusion. He sees the wasted minutes and unrealized hours, the hundreds of opportunities lost forever. He sees the diverse thoughts converge about the clock; he sees the people enslaved under the cruel order of the minute hand, the hour hand, and of the rising and setting sun. And the clock ticks, remorseless, forever on.

—E. Smith

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## The Sad Tale of Archimedes Smith - or Just Plain Archy

By JEAN ARMSTRONG

Once upon a time there lived (I think) a fellow named Smith who wasn't connected in any way with cough drops or movie shorts. He was just plain Mr. Smith—Archimedes Smith—of Plainsfield, Mississippi.

Mr. Smith, or Archy as his friends called him, was a lovable chap. He loved everybody and everybody—well, they tried! He was about as tall as a refrigerator and as wide as a stove, and those were his favorite instruments. His nose looked like Ingrid's and his eyes were a charming tattle-tale gray. He was bouncy and happy—especially when he'd just played a practical joke on somebody.

Archy was most versatile and loved to do strenuous things like play records and finger-paint. But there was one thing Archy didn't like to do, and that was to work—so he didn't.

"Why bother?" said Archy, who lived comfortably off an inheritance from an old maid aunt who died one night from sheer fright when lovable Archy put a mouse down her back.

Archy lived in a bachelor's club where mostly bachelors lived (except on special occasions). It was peachy fun living with the bachelors because they were all jolly good fellows who didn't get too mad when Archy squirted seltzer water on 'em from the transom, or greased their door-knobs. They just grinned, loaded their pistols, and overlooked it.

Since he wasn't of the laboring class, Archy slept late every morning . . . That was good because by the time he woke up the Bachelors were all gone to work and Archy could begin short-sheeting them and taking doors off their hinges. (He was so clever with his hands.)



After several months this joking practically became monotonous. After all, one can be clever just SO long and then one gets tired of one's own cleverness.

So Archy began sleeping later and later, and dreaming more and more.

He had all sorts of dreams—short and long, happy and unhappy, and even day. Then came the night when he had that last dream—that fateful one, the dream that just *might've* ended Archy's career as a practical joker. Or anything else, for that matter.

It happened on a Saturday night when Archy had eaten buttered sardines and chocolate-covered radishes for supper. (Later he remembered that the chocolate on one of the radishes tasted funny. He attributed the fateful dream to that.)

He was lying in bed thinking how much fun it would be to take a trip to somewhere like New York where he'd have oodles of people to pull practical jokes on and not some ole jolly Bachelors, who weren't even jolly anymore. He'd decided he was wasting his talents in Plainsfield. He wanted to get into the big-time. Soon his desires became realities as he drifted into the land of nod. (Colloquial for "he was grabbin' a little shut-eye").

Archy saw himself at the ticket window in the Dashound Bus Station buying a ticket (naturally) for New York. Behind him stood the jolly Bachelors, en masse, waving flags and beating drums.

"My," said Archy, "one would almost think they were glad to see me leave. They can't fool me—I know they'll miss me."

And the Bachelors, a mess again, said, "Don't worry, if we miss this time we'll try again!"

So Archy, believing nothing was amiss since he was amister (?), boarded the bus and took a seat (or he would've if it hadn't been nailed down) right behind the driver so he could annoy him a little. Soon the bus was rolling along the highway toward New York.

A hundred miles and three practical jokes later the bus broke down—but good! The jolly Bachelors had really done a splendid job! They'd put a buckle on the fan belt and hocked the piston rings.

Suddenly Archy saw another bus coming. He darted across the street to catch it, but before he could—BANG!! He was hit by a little boy on a green and yellow flexi-racer.

Archy missed the bus. Furthermore he was SO sore when he woke up he couldn't do any practical joking for months. And furthermore, the jolly Bachelors got jollier since they were living jolly-good practical joke-free lives. They gained weight and even got rid of their ulcers.

As for poor Archy—well, maybe next time he'll take my advice when I say

"Don't change buses in the middle of a dream."



# Creeps In this Petty Pace

A One-Act Play  
By COURTNEY KNIGHT

CHARACTERS, in order of appearance:

Mr. Frank Connerat, a famous criminal lawyer

Miss Dancy, his secretary

Mr. Ralph Lawton, his partner in law, also a criminal lawyer

Mrs. Connerat

Mr. Connerat's Thought-Self

Mrs. Slattery ) mere dramatic visualiza-

Mr. Larson ) tions of the people

Abbe Malone ) he thinks about

Mrs. Grady, mother to the innocent Jim

The Scene: *Mr. Connerat's office. Its furnishings are solid and massive, in wealthy good taste. Facing the audience there is a large, leather-covered easy chair toward the back of the stage in the center. So the right is the lawyer's large desk, facing front and center. His swivel chair is behind it, and there are two conference chairs informally placed in front. There is a window on the right wall behind the desk. A door on the left wall, center, opens into his secretary's office and the out of doors. A large bookcase packed with law volumes stands against the back wall toward the left.*

The time: *Eleven o'clock.*

The scene opens. Mr. Connerat is alone, seated at his desk looking over some papers. He stops, and buzzes for his secretary. Her voice is heard through the small amplifier on his desk.

Sec: Yes, Mr. Connerat?

Conn: Miss Dancy, please look in the files and bring me the brief on the Kenyon case of last March. I think it can help me on my defense tomorrow.

*(She appears with a sheaf of papers and hands them to him.)*

Conn: Thank you. *(She starts out.)* Oh, and Miss Dancy, did you call my wife to tell her that I wouldn't be able to meet her for lunch?

Sec: Yes sir, I explained that you were too busy preparing for your big scene tomorrow. But sir, she seemed rather annoyed and upset. She wanted to talk to you and said she might drop in anyway when she finished her shopping.

Conn: *(looking annoyed)* Thank you, that will be all. *(She leaves.)*

*(He begins to look over the papers she has just brought in, riffling through them as if looking for a particular point of speech. Within the moment his partner comes in.)*

Mr. L.: Well Frank, how are you coming? Getting rather excited over your final clinching speech tomorrow, aren't you?

Conn: Frankly, Ralph, I'm not looking forward to it. I dread it. I'm beginning to wish I hadn't taken this case.

Mr. L.: My God, Frank, why? It's your big chance. You're a big name now, but if you can talk that jury into believing what you are going to spring on them tomorrow your persuasive powers will be cinched. If you swing this one I think they'll call you the best criminal lawyer in the state, and not just in Chicago. You've read the way the press has played up you and your bull voice thus far in the trial. I'd give anything to be in your shoes, or to have a chance like you do tomorrow. —Why do you feel reluctant about it?

Conn: It's my wife, Ralph. She's down on me. Helen can't seem to understand that anything goes. She doesn't see that it doesn't matter whether you play absolutely cricket, as long as you win the case. She thinks I shouldn't protect a man unless I know him to be innocent.

Mr. L.: My Lord, Man, what you must have to live with. She evidently doesn't know much about criminal law. Does she suppose a man would pay you 50,000 dollars to plead for him, like Parks is, if he was innocent to begin with? I can see you now, living in a shabby little flat somewhere taking no cases but those of innocent men. Why in the world do you pay any attention to her?

Conn: Because I have to live with her, (pause) and because I happen to love her, very much. I care what she thinks, and even more what she thinks of me. You can't understand that, can you, Ralph?

Mr. L.: Well, yes, I suppose so. I'm glad I'm not married though.— But look here, Frank, I hope you're not thinking of throwing this case. Parks isn't giving you that 50,000. He's paying you to get him out of a tight spot. Why, man, he'd have his henchmen on you within a week if he thought you deliberately threw the case. Your life wouldn't be worth a nickel.

Conn: I know. (*He speaks wearily, and wipes his forehead, then speaks slowly, softly, and rather dazedly*) I know.

Mr. L.: (sarcastically) Well, I'll go away and leave you to your hen-pecked thoughts. God bless you young man. (*seriously*) If there's anything I can do to help you let me know. My next case doesn't come up for a month you know. (*He leaves*)

(*Connerat doesn't go back to his papers but stares into space, worried, his chin resting on his palms. In a moment he is buzzed. Miss Dancy announces his wife. She comes in, hurriedly, as a woman does when she has a purpose. He rises and waits until she is seated. Then sits again with the air of a man tormented.*)

Conn: Good morning, Darling.

Mrs. C.: (*impatiently*) Good morning.

Conn: Did you have good luck with your shopping?

Mrs. C.: (*shortly*) Yes, thank you.

Conn: Oh! Helen, I'm sorry I had to break our luncheon date.—You aren't mad . . .

Mrs. C.: I didn't come out of my way in this heat to pass the time of day, Frank. I want to have a serious talk with you, without interrupt-



ions. You may as well know my dander's up. I'm here to give back some of your oratory!—Have you had any lunch?

Conn: No, Helen, I'll send out for a sandwich and some coffee later. I've been too busy to think about it.

Mrs. C: Too busy, too busy! Always busy, and about what?! Too busy making money to have lunch with your wife, even when I meet you downtown. Too busy during the day and too tired at night to be sweet and thoughtful to your children too, or to see your friends, or enjoy yourself, or go to church. You've got to stop it, Frank.

Conn: (*agonized expression*) But, Helen, what do you expect me to do? I don't do all this for myself. I make the money to help you and the children. Don't you like having a fur coat? Don't you like your nice house and having your own car? You're sounding idealistic. Face facts, Helen, we've got to have money to live. I must support my family.

Mrs. C: Yes, Frank, I appreciate the nice things you give me, and the more than adequate way we live, but I wouldn't die with a little less! In fact I might be a lot happier, and I know the children would. Don't you realize that companionship in a family means as much as cars and fur coats. Can't you understand that the security found in a father's love means more to Dick and Sally at this age than material security, expensive toys.—Me face facts! I'm looking at them! I see you have to make money to live, but you don't have to make money defending guilty men, men who are wealthier than you on stolen money.

Conn: Helen! Why are you talking like this? You don't sound like yourself.

Mrs. C: Why, Frank, why! Because I mean everything I say, and because I've been thinking about this a long time. You say I don't sound like myself.—You don't sound like yourself, Frank, when you get before a jury and start your oratorical ravings, nor do you sound like the man I married when you make them believe lies!

Conn: But, Helen, law is all I know, and criminal law is my field. It's all I'm equipped for. Please, Darling!

Mrs. C: (*Speaking in blend of pleading and persuasion*) Of course I understand that, Darling, but you can be a criminal lawyer and keep your integrity, and your sense of proportion. You can't go on spending your talents to defeat the principle of justice that all law is supposedly based on.—Darling, go back, and defend justice instead of robbing her. You can protect people you know to be wrongly accused. You could spend your life protecting the poor, the people who get the bad breaks, the ones who are framed.—There are ways and ways, Frank. Please.

Conn: Well, exactly what are you getting at? Why did you come and tell me all this now, here at the office, when you know I'm in a mess trying to polish up tomorrow's defense.

Mrs. C: Why? Isn't it obvious? I've had enough. I can't take it any longer.

I'm tired of seeing you corrupted. I can't bear to think you'd give



up our lunch date to think up a way to keep a guilty man from the chair.

Conn: Helen! I'm sorry but you'll have to stop calling Parks a guilty man. Every man is innocent until proved otherwise!

Mrs. C: I'm sorry if the truth hurts you so. Frank.—I want you to give up the case, or if you can't do that then you can throw it.

Conn: Helen! What are you saying! I'm being paid 50,000 dollars to win this case. It would be dishonorable to throw it.

Mrs. C: Dishonorable? . . . To defend honor. You're developing the criminal's ethics.—I see your point though, a contract is a legal bond, and you might be prosecuted yourself if you broke it. But you could . . .

Conn: Helen, even if it weren't a question of legality. It might endanger my life to throw this case.

Mrs. C: You could turn it over to Mr. Lawton. He'd love to take it.

Conn: But, Darling, can't you see! This is the biggest case of my career. What I do tomorrow can make or break me. I have a chance of being named the biggest criminal lawyer in the States.

Mrs. C: Yes, Frank. I know, it's a big case. That's why I couldn't wait till you came home to talk to you. It can make or break you. I agree. You can go on with this case and lose the last threads of my respect for you, just to puff up your own ego, and your purse,—But will *they* stick by you if you're ever down and out?

*(He rises from his desk, worried, excited, flustered, frustrated, with an agonized expression and voice:)* Helen!

Mrs. C: I'm going now, Frank. You haven't given me an answer, and I won't ask for one now. Make your own decision. I'll know soon enough.—But Frank, if you love me, and you want me to stick by you, think hard about the step you will take for tomorrow.

*(He comes around the desk and draws her close to him, looking hard into her face.)*

Conn: Yes, Darling, I'll think it over.—I don't know when I'll get home today.

*(He grabs her suddenly, almost violently, draws her very close and kisses her, with sincerity, intensity. Curtain closes on them)*

Scene II—*The same. The stage is dark except for one small bright, direct spotlight. The spot comes through the window behind the desk and shines directly on Connerat, though only on his head. He is seated in the big leather chair reading the Parks brief, distracted, worried. The rest of his body and the chair are in semi-darkness. The rest of the room is totally dark. He is quite alone. We see him look disturbed as his Thought-Self rises from behind his chair. The same spot that is trained on Connerat's face dimly illumines the Thought-Self, so that we see-it, see-it-not; the light plays eerily on it's face. As the other characters in his thoughts materialize a spot is shone on them, not a bright one, a tiny one. It plays only on their faces. The rest of their bodies, dressed in black, are only seen by staring.*

The time: 1:30



*(Thought-Self speaks slowly as thoughts file by. His voice is accusing, compelling).*

Thought-Self: Listen to her. Listen to her! Do you want Helen, or the masses, to stick by you? Time is running out! Tomorrow is almost here. Now is the time for decision and revision. Now!—Can you go through with it? You know that man is guilty, and that he's dangerous.—Put down that brief. *(Conn. does so.)* Parks ought to be behind bars. He deserves the chair. You have no right to defend him. You shouldn't have taken the case. You had no reason except your lust for money and power. You have no right to defeat justice to further your own selfish ends.—Think. Think a minute. Look at what you've already done. Remember the Larson case? Remember the dead Mr. Larson, the way he looked laid out on the slab?

*(Larson appears to Conn.'s left in about the middle distance of the floor space. Lots of white powder and the white spot give his face a deathlike pallor. When the light is first turned on him to make him visible, his face is toward the audience, his mouth and eyes closed, a death-mask. The head slowly turns until it faces the lawyer. He winces and closes his eyes momentarily. The head does not move again.)*

TS: Where do you suppose Tom Gilbert is now? Tom, the carefree, wealthy young playboy who killed this man in a drunken brawl. Tom Gilbert, who came yelping to you to help him out, cause he didn't mean it, just forgot himself. I wonder if he's forgotten himself anymore since then? That was an easy case wasn't it? One of your first. Simple, and lots of money for you. There was simply the dear Mr. Larson, a poor man, a nobody, without any known relatives to raise hell; and the rich young boy with social position and an influential father. Yes, Simple. Tom Gilbert is free because of you.

*(TS stops talking for a moment and the lights go off on Larson's face making him disappear into the darknesss.*

*Conn. opens his mouth as if to speak in protest, stops and drops his head. his fists clench.)*

TS: What? The brave Mr. Connerat trying to escape? . . . Escape your own thoughts. You can't. That's one thing you can't silence, thoughts. They will out. Remember Mrs. Slattery? Only last year there was Mrs. Slattery. Remember what she said to you? You can still remember; you can still see her face, can't you?

*(Mrs. Slattery appears to left, right beside his chair, staring down at him. He looks up and shudders. Mrs. Slat. begins talking in a slow, flat, matter-of-fact monotone, but she nearly screams the last word "you".)*

Mrs. S: I hate you, Mr. Connerat, bright Mr. Connerat. I hate your guts. You killed my son. Sure, I know what you're thinking. You're proud, thinking that you saved him. You're thinking how wonderful you sounded at the trial. It's easy to forget the truth, ain't it, 'specially when it hurts. I'll tell you, Mr. Lawyer. I'll tell you the truth about it all. Sure, my son shot a guard. He shot a guard that would have shot him. But he was working with a gang, Mr. Lawyer. When you're



working for a gang you do what you're told, and you also don't get much of the pickings. It's the big boys that get the real dough. And you helped my son, sure you did, but you charged him more than you shulda. All the money they got outa' the raid the police got back. My kid didn't have no money. And now he's dead. He got shot trying to break in a place to get enough money to pay you!

*(With this emphatic YOU Conn. covers his eyes and swings his head toward the desk, away from her. As he does this she disappears, for the spot goes off.)*

TS: You don't like your thoughts do you? Not when they betray you; not when they cast you down from your pedestal. Not after your wife has told you what you're really like, what you're becoming. Not when you want to do more dirty work tomorrow. But you know you can't escape. You've outsmarted justice a long time. You've been helping other people to escape. All this time you've thought you were so damn smart. Thought you and your filthy clients were getting away with murder. It can't be done. The recognition has to come.—Come on, think of Abbe Malone.

*(Here Conn. turns his head aside again as if to escape the thought and the illusion.)*

TS: There's no use trying to get out of it. Your memories don't like lock and key; they slip out through the keyhole. Look!

*(Abbe appears. The spot picks him up over by the door. Abbe has a young, innocent face, a pleading, truthful face. He doesn't look at the lawyer but toward the audience, his face lifted.)*

TS: There he is again, still saying the same old things.

Abbe: I didn't, I didn't I tell you, Judge. I couldn't kill my friend. *(he pauses as if he is listening to someone)*—I know I can't prove where I was and I know we'd had a quarrel, but don't you see, Judge? I couldn't kill nobody . . . Much less old John. It's all a frame, Judge, a frame. I didn't do it, honest! *(Another, longer pause, then Abbe looks shocked, drops his face into his hands, begins to cry and moans:)*

Abbe: Oh, no! *(The light on Abbe's head is intensified as TS speaks.)*

TS: Look at him! That's a hard one to swallow. It takes a hell-of-a-lot of evil courage to send an innocent young man to the chair just to protect a personal friend who happens to commit murder!!

*(Abbe disappears, and there is a pause in TS's flow.)*

TS: Your yesterdays aren't pretty, but they creep on and on taking away from your tomorrows. Think of Tomorrow.—What are you going to do tomorrow? What about the trial tomorrow? Are you going to stay on the same path?

*(TS disappears behind the chair and Conn. is left, stunned. In a moment he struggles out of his seat and hurries over to the desk. The stage is still in darkness, but the lawyer is clearly seen for his path to the desk is the same as that of the spot light shining through the window. He sees Mrs. C's picture, picks it up to look a moment, then pushes hard at the buzzer to his sec.)*



Sec: Yes, Mr. Connerat? (*He opens his mouth to speak to her, but nothing comes out.*)

Did you buzz, sir? (*He looks desperate, puts his hand wonderingly to his throat and tries to speak once more, nothing.*)

Mr. Connerat?—Mr. Connerat!

Curtain.

Scene III *The same. Curtain opens as Connerat and Lawton come hurriedly into the office, hats and coats still on. The sec. hurries after them as they remove wraps, flinging them over a chair.*

The time: 3:30

Sec: Can you talk yet, sir? (*Conn. shakes his head impatiently.*) What happened, Mr. Lawton? What did the doctor say?

Mr. L: Nothing very encouraging. He found absolutely no organic symptoms, no apparent reason for the acute laryngitis. Frank hasn't been straining his voice.

Sec: Then what is it? How long will it last? (*Conn. sits down behind desk. The other two remain standing.*)

Mr. L: The doctor said it was a form of aphasia. Its cause is evidently purely mental, a block of some sort. He says there's no telling how long it will last. Mr. Connerat seems to know a lot more about it than he is inclined to tell, or rather write. The doctor said he won't get his voice back until the mental turmoil is sufficiently relieved. It may be a matter of hours, weeks, or months.

(*Here Miss Dancy turns directly to Connerat and addresses him.*)

Sec: Oh, Sir, That's ironic. You received a letter only this afternoon from the school of speech at North Western. They asked that you speak before the entire school on *The Principles of Persuasion*.

(*At hearing this Connerat jerks to attention, interested, listening.*)

The date is a month away. I wonder if you can make it. They offered money and spoke as if there would be a great deal of publicity attached. You will be one of a series of orators who are to talk on different phases of public speaking. I don't know how to answer them.

(*Here Connerat rises suddenly, his face clouds, his eyes roll wildly about in his frustrated agitation.*)

Mr. L: That's a good opportunity! Stall them off as long as possible. I know Frank will want the honor.—Hell, that's not our worry now! He hasn't decided what he's going to do about the trial tomorrow. He won't let me know what he expects to do, or what I'm to do. He's already been granted one postponement to give him a chance to figure out some loopholes. I know they won't let him put it off again. They'll think this is just a stall. I . . .

(*Lawton is interrupted by Conn. who is looking disgustedly at both of them. He motions them out. Lawton doesn't seem to pay any attention and starts to speak. Conn. rudely and demanding beckons them away. They leave, the sec. taking out the hats and coats. Conn. silently paces up and down the room, his face is drawn, his hands clenched behind him.*



*Suddenly the door opens and an old lady in rather shabby dress hurries in. The sec. comes in at her heels.)*

Old Lady: He's in here I know.—I gotta see the lawyer.

Sec: Mr. Connerat, I didn't plan to disturb you, but this woman wouldn't take no for an answer. She insisted on seeing you, immediately. I'm sorry Mr. Connerat.

Old Lady: I done come from 90 miles. I done spent my money, and caught a bus and come 90 miles.

*(Conn. rises looking annoyed, but makes no move to dismiss the old woman.)*

Sec: You shouldn't have broken in like this. Mr. Connerat is very busy with his defense for tomorrow. You'll have to be very brief. *(impatiently)* Don't expect him to talk back to you. He has laryngitis and cannot talk. *(to Conn.)* Sir, would you like me to stay. I might speak to her for you and speed things up.

*(This is said from behind the woman's back. The sec gives a disgusted and apologetic shrug as if to say: "I'm sorry. I know you're not interested in this old woman, but I couldn't stop her."*

*Conn. shakes his head and motions the sec out. Then he turns to the old lady who is very excited but looking at him pleadingly. He relaxes a bit and motions her to a seat, then he takes his own behind the desk.)*

OL: I wouldna broke in, but I done been standing on the bus till I'm plum tuckered out. I'm an old woman, and I can't wait. So I hate to bother you but I gotta. I'm Mrs. Grady. I know you don't know me, but then I don't know nuthin' 'bout you either. But I hear you help boys that are in trouble. I got a son, sir. He's thirty. I don't know nuthin' 'bout lawyers but I read that you protected people that the law wants to persecute. My son, my Jim needs protection. The cops have come and taken him away to jail. They're accusin' him of burnin' a warehouse. They say my Jim did it, but he didn't, sir. I know he didn't. I'd swear on it Mr. Connerat. *(Conn. looks interested and motions her to go on.)* They say the warehouse was full of important stuff. The warehouse belonged to a fellow Jim works for. This fellow says the stuff in it was worth maybe 50,000 dollars. I know it's hard to believe one place could be worth so much. It's too much for me even to think about, but that's whut the man said.—I know I must sound sorta confused, but you can talk to my Jim about it. He's in the jail, but he understands better than me. All I know is that they're trying to take my only boy. They say Jim can be sent to the pen for it. Jim's all I've got in the world. He supports me. He's a good boy. Maybe not the best, but he wouldn't do nuthin' like that. You know he wouldn't. I keep tellin' 'em he was at home at the time. A lotta nights Jim goes out, almost every night, but that time I was sick and I made him promise to stay home. We told 'em that, but they won't believe us. Instead they believe some big important man, a man named Tom Gilbert sir, he's rich, and everybody knows him. He keeps tellin' 'em Jim did it.

*(At the mention of T. G.'s name Conn. picks up a pad and begins scrib-*



*bling a note. He buzzes his sec. She comes in and the OL stops. Conn. hands sec. the note, then picks up the Parks brief and gives her that also.)*

Sec: But Mr. Connerat. You really mean for me to give the brief to Mr. Lawton? You're giving him the case? (*Conn, nods*) Well, I guess that's about all you can do. But . . . (*Conn. motions her out and nods to the OL to continue.*)

OL: My Jim didn't do it! It's a frame, sir. That's whut Jim says it is. Please believe us. Don't let them trick him, or send him to the pen! (*Conn. is nodding now*) You've got to help us, sir. People know you. They'll believe you. Nobody knows us. They won't listen to people like me, I don't know much and I don't talk right, and sir, I ain't got no money. But Mr. Connerat you just gotta help my Jim. I'll do anything for you. I'll give you all the money I got saved. I got 15 dollars saved. And I'll work for you. I used to do housework real good. Both together it might come to 50 dollars. You'll help us won't you? I know I'm being uppity, but you've jest got to! A poor lady like me can't live without the money Jim makes.—It was a frame! Please (*pathetically*) will you help us make them believe?

(*Conn. stands as she says, "will you help us . . ." He looks as if he will answer, then stops to begin writing a note. He stops again, looking amazed. He speaks.*)

Conn: I believe you, Mrs. Grady. I'll take the case. I'll help you.  
Curtain

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### THE ETERNAL TIMETABLE

*Crowded with weary travelers,  
The bus speeds through the darkness  
Toward its distant destination.  
At each junction the whirling machine halts  
Only long enough to release a few;  
Then the powerful engine reasserts its domination  
And the occupants remaining  
Again fall under the spell of its hypnotic droning.*

*Occupying a seat over the rear wheels,  
One lone passenger remains wakeful,  
Staring expressionless out  
At the fugitive patterns in the night.  
The lights of a city loom larger  
Until, roaring up to the station ramp,  
The giant force relents  
And relinquishes its hold.*

*The stranger mechanically gathers  
Together his few parcels  
And fades away in the deserted night,  
Where the eternal timetable is all of reality.*

—J. Wootton

